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My People, the Soviet Uighurs

Novosti Press Agency
Publishing House
Moscow, 1978

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Editing completed on December 21, 1978

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The Uighurs: Who Are They?

I should like to acquaint the reader with the Soviet Uighurs, a small people who are equal among equals in the fraternal multinational family of Soviet peoples.

But first a few words about the history of this people whose past and present life is unknown to many.

The Uighurs are an ancient people of Central Asia whose language belongs to the Turkic group. Their history goes back many thousands of years. There are many monuments of their ancient culture, which testify to their glorious historical past and their valuable contribution to human civilization from the earliest times. They now live in the USSR and the People's Republic of China, where over six million live in the Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region, as well as in Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan and several other countries. In the Soviet Union

about 200,000 Uighurs live chiefly in the Kazakh, Uzbek, Kirghiz and Turkmen republics.

Information on the Uighurs may be found in the archives and libraries of Moscow and Leningrad, Tashkent and Alma Ata, London, Paris, Vienna and Cairo. Written in various European and Oriental languages the records describe the life of my ancestors. Many famous people in history have mentioned Uighurs in their works and diaries, among them Alexander the Great, the geographer Ptolemy, and the famous traveller Marco Polo. Gunnar Yarring, the contemporary Swedish Turcologist and student of Uighur civilization, well known for his diplomatic activities in the United Nations, travelled in his youth to Eastern Turkestan (Sinkiang), the far-off land of the Uighurs, and described it in several publications. In 1976 Yarring attended a conference of Turcologists in Alma Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan.

Russian and Soviet scholars have made a notable contribution to studies of Uighur history. Prime importance is attached in the Soviet Union to the cultural progress of each nation and nationality regardless of its size and their history is carefully studied.

Uighur studies have developed into an independent field of research. Scores of Russian, Uighur, Kazakh, Uzbek and Tatar scholars are working on this subject in Moscow, Leningrad and the capitals of the Soviet republics.

I have before me a voluminous monograph, *The Economy and Social System of the Uighur State in the 10th-14th Centuries* by Dmitry Tikhonov, a prom-

Uighur Orientalists at the Tashkent Institute of Oriental Studies: Dzhalilov (left), Kutlukov and Karimov study an ancient Uighur manuscript. The chapter "A Big Family" is devoted to Amanbek Dzhalilov and his relatives.

inent historian and the author of several works on the history of the Uighurs, with whom I am well acquainted.

It is also of no little value that in Soviet times the Uighurs themselves have produced many scholars who are making good progress in studying their people's complex but highly interesting past. Their books are published in their native tongue and are for the Uighurs an invaluable source of knowledge on the history of their forebears.

What do we learn of the Uighurs from the available historical sources? Firstly, that their history goes back long before the Christian era. In those far-off times they were a nomadic people engaged in cattle-breeding and hunting. Later they settled and took up farming. They inhabited the territory of what is now Sinkiang, known in ancient times as Eastern Turkestan, and of neighbouring states. In the third century B. C. and the fourth century A.D. they played a noteworthy role in the Hunnish tribal alliance.

In his *Sketches on the History of the Uighurs in Soviet Kazakhstan* the Uighur historian Malik Kabirov writes that long before the modern era the Uighurs had a written language and a history of their own and in the first centuries A.D. had a literature written in their own alphabet.

Their ethnic consolidation was completed in the eighth century with the formation of the early-feudal Uighur state. Several ancient and medieval Uighur states, some of which existed for hundreds of years, are known to history.

The Uighur states had large cities and cattle-breeding, agriculture and the cultivation of orchards and vineyards were well developed. Irrigation was at a high level. Much attention was paid to breeding horses: Uighur horses had a high market value in the Chinese Empire and other countries. Crafts flourished in the cities. Marco Polo, who made his famous journey to Asia in 1271-1295, visited the Uighur state and was impressed by the beauty and uniqueness of the local handicrafts. Uighur swords, spears, bows, objects of jasper and glass, farm implements and linen textiles were known in many countries.

My forebears left behind unique cultural monuments, masterpieces of national architecture, music, art and literature.

The Uighur people have a rich folk culture of song and poetry, tales, lyrical epic legends *(dastan)*, heroic historical songs, legends, stories, proverbs, maxims and riddles.

Uighur classical literature includes such eleventh-century masterpieces as the poem *Knowledge That Gives Happiness* by Yusuf Balasaguni and the *Dictionary of Turkic Dialects* by the remarkable writer and scholar Mahmud Kashgari.

For centuries the Uighurs lived at the crossroads of three civilizations—Central-Asian, Indian and Chinese, a fact which left its imprint on the formation of their literature and general culture. The dominant influence, however, was the culture of Central Asia.

"Ming uyi." What does this mean? "Ming" is "thousand", and "uyi"—"house". "Ming uyi" means "A Thousand Cave Dwellings". The solemn mysterious significance of these words always fills my people with a feeling of national pride. In the vast territory of present-day Sinkiang the forebears of the Uighurs hewed very many cave temples in rock mountains and partially underground. Highly-skilled architects, sculptors and artists created such

beauty inside the cave temples that it never ceases to astonish.

When M. Dyakonov, the Russian Orientalist, visited "Ming uyi" he singled out the cave temples at the three northern oases. He described the paintings there as masterpieces surpassing anything of the monumental art known to us in all South-Western and Central Asia.

Sabit Mukanov, a Soviet writer from Kazakhstan, who visited Sinkiang more than 15 years ago, was admitted to only a small number of the decorated cave temples. Yet what he saw there, he said, was more interesting, majestic and mysterious than anything he had seen during his visits to other ancient architectural monuments and he left the place with profound regret and unforgettable impressions.

According to historians the building of "Ming uyi" began at the beginning of the modern era and continued for several centuries. The interior decor shows the influence of Buddhist traditions and Indian art.

Much later Uighur culture reflected the influence of Islam.

Now a few words about another masterpiece of Uighur national culture–the Uighur *mukam*.

The Uighurs are a musical people. Describing his journey to the land of the Uighurs in the thirteenth century Marco Polo wrote that "the people there are merry, fond of music, singing and dancing".

Uighur folk music is varied in form and content. Its crowning achievement are the *Twelve Mukams*, a vast collection of songs and lyrical and epic legends *(dastans)* and highly complex melodies, com-

Amirdin Genyakov, a master craftsman who has made hundreds of folk instruments.

posed over many centuries. The most talented Uighur musicians were among its authors and performers. They carefully preserved and transmitted this treasury to future generations, all the while perfecting its performance. It is not merely a collection of various musical themes but an integral cyclical work in which all the parts, the plethora of songs and *marguls* (independent melodies rounding off groups of songs) are blended into a single whole and are performed in a definite order which is never changed by the *mukam* musicians. The continuous alteration of sad lyrical and quick gay melodies captivates audiences of all ages: young people, horsemen and grey-bearded story-tellers are ready to listen to the *mukams* day and night.

I should like to refer once again to Sabit Mukanov. During his visit to Sinkiang he listened to the *Twelve Mukams* which made an indelible impression on him: he could not help comparing the compositional structure of the *Twelve Mukams* with the intricate labyrinths of "Ming uyi". The ancient dwellings hewn in sheer rock above the Kyzyl river contain thousands of rooms varying in size and age forming a single architectural and ethnographic monument. In much the same way hundreds of melodies have been harmoniously combined into a musical wonder. The *Twelve Mukams* is an encyclopaedia of the Uighur people's musical riches.

Eastern Turkestan is considered the birthplace of the *Twelve Mukams*. But they owe their rebirth to the land of the Soviets and I will speak of this later.

Modern political maps and publications do not give the name of the Uighurs' original homeland—Sharky Turkeston, which is the Uighur for Eastern Turkestan, the cradle of the Uighur states and their

unique civilization. Instead one reads: Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region, or simply Sinkiang.

Why this change? Why have the Uighurs themselves been forced to call Sharky Turkeston by the Chinese name Sinkiang?

Here is what historian Malik Kabirov writes in the book I have mentioned:

"For ages the Uighurs defended their independence from foreign encroachments and primarily from the Chinese emperors. The year 1760 was a sad one for the Uighur people: Eastern Turkestan was overrun by Manchu-Chinese troops. The Ching rulers did not bring progress to the land of the Uighurs: far from introducing developed crafts, agrotechnology or culture, they brought the country to economic decline and its cultural monuments perished."

To the Chinese colonialists the ancient name of the land was an eyesore which reminded them of its former sovereignty and centuries-long resistance to Chinese rule. To wipe out all trace of the Uighurs' sovereignty they called the country "Sinkiang" meaning "New Frontier". This was not just a new name, it reflected the aggressive, colonial essence of their policy.

The Uighurs did not reconcile themselves to their colonial status. Together with other peoples of Sinkiang they stepped up their struggle for freedom and independence against growing colonial oppression. The flame of this struggle grew brighter with each new generation.

The Uighurs continued their armed struggle against the Chinese feudal dynasties in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Uighur-Dungan uprising of 1864 overthrew the rule of Manchu and Chinese feudal lords and established the independent state of Yettishar (Seven Cities). But in 1877

the uprising was brutally suppressed. The early half of the twentieth century was also a turbulent period in the life of the Uighur people.

The downfall of the last Ching dynasty in 1911-1913 gave power to the bourgeoisie and put an end to the feudal period in China's history. Soon the Kuomingtang, a reactionary bourgeois party headed by Chiang Kai-shek, came to power.

For the Uighurs this was but a change of name, for national oppression remained as before, and Sinkiang was the same colonial backwater as under the Ching empire. From the preceding feudal imperial dynasties the Kuomingtang regime inherited Great Han chauvinism and the policy of discrimination against the Uighurs and other non-Chinese peoples. It would not even consider granting the Uighur people any right whatsoever to national self-determination.

The Kuomingtang regime concentrated on a policy of assimilation. It had far-reaching perfidious aims: to destroy all the Uighurs' national features, their unique culture, national customs and traditions, and their national language, and to dissolve the Uighurs in the multi-million Chinese nation.

The Uighurs and other non-Han peoples formed the bulk of the population in Sinkiang and would not tolerate their lack of rights and their oppression. In the early thirties a wave of large-scale armed uprisings of the Uighurs against the Kuomingtang yoke swept the whole of Sinkiang. The crushing of these uprisings did not break the Uighurs' growing resistance to national oppression.

They knew that in the Soviet Union, just across the Sinkiang border, Soviet Uighurs, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Turkmen and other Turkic peoples had been given the right to determine their own national destiny. And they had chosen in favour of socialist national states which of their own free will and on the basis of equal rights had entered the USSR. Uighurs and other peoples of Sinkiang were aware that in the world's first land of socialism their brothers were enjoying all the benefits of national statehood.

This and the Soviet people's victory over German fascism and Japanese militarism were a great stimulus to the development of the national-liberation movement in Sinkiang.

The Uighurs and other non-Han peoples took up arms against the hated Kuomingtang regime. The three northern districts of Sinkiang (Ili, Tarbagatai and Altai) were the cradle of this revolutionary struggle. By September 1945 these districts were cleared of Kuomingtang troops. Following the victory of the people's revolution in China the People's Republic of China was proclaimed. In 1955 the Sinkiang province was reorganized into the Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region.

This, my dear reader, is the first part of my short account of the Uighur people and their ancient homeland—Eastern Turkestan.

Who are the Soviet Uighurs? What brought them to the territory of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizia and Turkmenia?

When the Chinese colonialists seized Eastern Turkestan in the eighteenth century they subjected the local people to oppression and brutal exploitation. The Uighurs reacted by taking up arms but the forces were unequal. To quench the flame of the national-liberation struggle in Eastern Turkestan the Chinese authorities resorted to brutal repression. Thousands of the insurgents were imprisoned or executed.

In the nineteenth century tens of thousands of Uighurs from southern Sinkiang decided to leave

their native land. With permission from the Russian authorities they settled in the Ferghana Valley in Uzbekistan.

In the late nineteenth century the Uighurs of the Ili Sultanate bordering on Kazakhstan together with their sultan officially appealed to Russia to be accepted as its subjects.

Once again tens of thousands of Uighurs, weeping women, children and old folk, marched to an unknown future. Russia offered them lands in the frontier district of Semirechenskaya–the territory of the present Alma Ata and Taldy-Kurgan regions of Soviet Kazakhstan.

The settlers began a new life which, hard as it was, could not compare with the sufferings they had endured in their enemy-occupied homeland. They began a life of genuine freedom after the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917.

The aims of the great Lenin and the Communist Party he led–a world without war and exploitation and without social and national oppression, the world-wide brotherhood of working people and the equality of nations–were appreciated by the toiling masses of the Uighur and other peoples. Hand in hand with Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Turkmen and other Soviet nationalities the best sons of the Uighur people actively contributed to building the world's first socialist state and they defended socialism from the encroachments of its enemies.

The young Soviet state began life in difficult circumstances. Immediately after the October Revolu-

Jalil Imirov, 82 year-old pensioner of the Sverdlov collective farm, who helped to establish Soviet rule in Semirechye, with his 11-year-old grandson Satar Amrulayev, who attends the collective-farm's secondary school.

tion the hostile capitalist countries encircling Russia organized the armed intervention of 14 states against the Soviet republic, supported counter-revolutionary elements in the country and the Civil War which they had unleashed, and announced an economic blockade. Hunger, unemployment and economic ruin were widespread in the country.

After heroically defending its independence in the period of foreign intervention and the Civil War the Soviet republic ended economic chaos and in a historically short time was able by great efforts to reconstruct the national economy along socialist lines. Industrialization, the collectivization of agriculture and a cultural revolution followed one another. The Soviet state gained in strength and in moral and political unity and it consolidated the friendship of its more than 100 peoples. The USSR became a mighty industrial and agrarian power. It abolished unemployment and illiteracy and made great scientific and cultural progress. The attainment of a high level of science and culture was the goal for all the peoples of the Soviet Union and those who found this difficult received additional help.

The greatest difficulties were faced by peoples in outlying regions, whose development lagged considerably behind that of the central regions. Among these backward territories were Central Asia and Kazakhstan, where the Uighurs had found a second home. Agriculture was conducted by out-of-date methods and brought poor yields. Industry was confined chiefly to processing local farm produce. Almost the whole population was illiterate. Some people still led a nomadic way of life and preserved many survivals of clan society.

These outlying regions had to redouble their efforts to keep pace with the country's central regions. But their people, united by the Communist Party

In the Alma Ata region of Kazakhstan the Uighur district committee of the Communist Party discusses the expansion of sheep farming on industrial lines at local collective and state farms in the current five-year plan.

and inspired by the gigantic tasks of the country's reorganization, received the fraternal support of the family of Soviet nations and devoted all their creative powers to the new cause.

In prerevolutionary Russia the Kirghiz, Kazakh, Turkmen, Tajik and other peoples inhabiting outlying regions lived in various administrative provinces and regions of Russia. Their endeavours to achieve their own national statehood were suppressed by the tsarist government, which viewed the outlying regions as colonies and feared that national statehood would lead to their independence.

The Soviet state immediately began to abolish the legacy of the tsarist colonial policy. Its efforts to

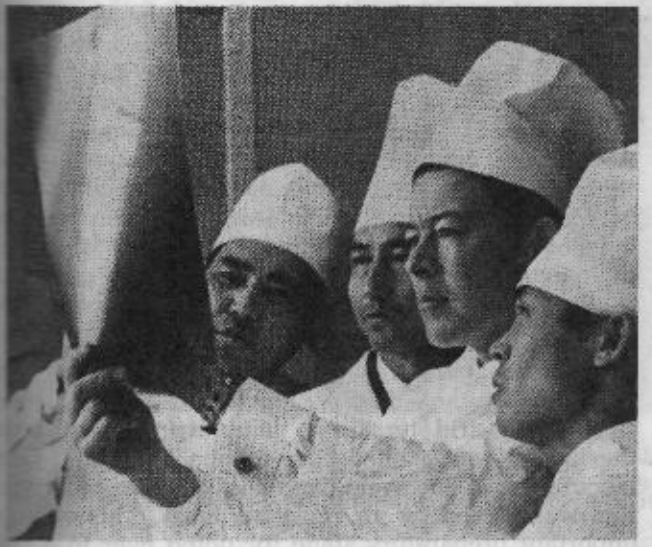
The biggest Uighur farm in the district is the Emghek collective farm in Kazakhstan.
A new sheep-breeding centre for 50,000 sheep at the Emghek collective farm.

Taip Abdymanapov (centre) is always willing to pass on his experience to young farmers. For 16 years he has been chairman of the Emghek collective farm, which has made good progress under his management.

give the peoples national statehood were hampered by the Civil War, by the economic and cultural backwardness of these territories and by the complex character of relations between the national groups. Local counter-revolutionary forces—the bourgeoisie, the rich landowners, beys and kulaks, supported by British imperialism—spared no effort to sow discontent and hatred between different nationalities, they

Rakhilyam Seitova, team leader at the Sverdlov collective farm in the Uighur district, Alma Ata region, is a Hero of Socialist Labour and a Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh SSR.

Ziya Samadi, a member of Union of Soviet Writers, is on the board of the Union of Writers of the Kazakh republic. His books are published in large editions in Uighur, Russian, Uzbek and Chinese.



Abdumanap Amitakhunov (second right), an Uighur, chief surgeon at the 200-bed district hospital in the village of Chundzha, studies an X-ray photograph before an operation.

organized uprisings against Soviet rule and *basmatchi* bandits terrorized the population. Yet all these counter-revolutionary schemes fell through—the peoples of these regions firmly took the road of socialism.

Following the October Revolution the Turkestan, Bukhara and Khorezm Soviet republics were formed on the territory of Turkestan. At that time these republics were not based on national composition. But in the mid-twenties rapid social and economic progress made it possible to form uniform national states. In accordance with the wishes of the Central Asian peoples decisions were adopted at the Con-

gresses of the Soviets to reorganize the Turkestan, Bukhara and Khorezm republics into the Uzbek and Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republics. The Kirghiz Autonomous Region became the Kirghiz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and the Tajik and Kazakh ASSR were formed. Later these three autonomous republics received the status of union republics. Together with Uzbekistan and Turkmenia they became independent states enjoying full rights, which of their own free will had united with other republics in the federative multinational state of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The land and water reforms adopted in the twenties speeded the economic development of this retarded and arid territory: land expropriated from the kulaks was handed over to poor peasants, farm labourers and metayers, and the problem of irrigation was solved on an equitable basis. This was an important preparatory stage for going over to a collective system of farming. The nomadic population settled down and joined collective farms which began to gain in strength and prosper. Kirghiz, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Uighurs and Russians pooled their efforts with members of other nationalities to raise the welfare of their farms.

Reorganization of the national economy along new socialist lines required the abolition of mass illiteracy and the training of specialists. Everywhere schools and educational centres were opened for adults. Primers and textbooks, instructional literature and fiction were published in national languages in mass editions. Alphabets were evolved and literature began to be published in nearly 40 languages that formerly had no written literature. This was organized by central publishing houses and later by those in national republics. New schools

Raziyam Masutova performs an Uighur dance with the folk ensemble of the Emghek collective farm. It is highly popular in the Uighur district where it gives over 100 concerts a year.

were built and secondary and higher educational establishments were founded.

The entire system of public education was reorganized on a socialist basis: all general education schools became state schools with a uniform curriculum. All private schools were prohibited; free tuition and co-education were introduced; all nationalities were given the right to study in their native tongue; the physical punishment of pupils was banned; new rules of admission to higher educational establishments were introduced giving workers and peasants access to a higher education.

Having done away with economic and cultural backwardness and feudal survivals these former outlying regions by-passed the painful capitalist stage of development and became advanced socialist states.

Shakhida Shaimardanova, a member of the Union of Soviet Composers, graduated from the Tashkent Conservatoire. Her music is highly popular among Soviet Uighurs.

Over sixty years have passed since the Great October Revolution. In the life of the Soviet Uighurs these years were equal to centuries. The Uighurs had been almost totally illiterate. There had been villages where it was almost impossible to find anyone capable of writing or reading a simple letter. The Uighurs had no notion of secondary, not to mention higher, education. They had no books or newspapers in their own language. What is more, the people lived in almost total isolation from the outside world. Information was obtained through "uzun-kulak" ("long ears"), the name for rumours that passed from mouth to mouth. At that time my people did not even have their own name, because the hard years that set in after China's conquest of Eastern Turkestan forced the Uighurs to forget their ancient name. They were identified by residence–for

instance, "Kashgarlyk" from the city of Kashgar, or by occupation–"Taranchi" meant "farmer". Only under Soviet rule did they regain their ancient name of Uighurs.

Within the Soviet state my small people with the help of all the fraternal Soviet peoples was able to overcome its age-old backwardness and achieve great successes in all spheres of life. All these achievements were the result of immense efforts and of dedicated work.

At present my kinsmen, the Soviet Uighurs, live chiefly in the Kazakh, Uzbek, Kirghiz and Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republics. There are not many of them–only 200 thousand in all. In the sixties their

Ruslan Jusupov, a young Uighur painter, shows colleagues his latest work depicting the Uighurs' emigration to the USSR from Sinkiang.

A scene from the play "Mother's White Dress" staged by the Uighur Theatre of Musical Comedy.

numbers increased by several thousand owing to the influx of emigrants from Sinkiang.

The Soviet Union is a federative state uniting 15 equal union republics which incorporate 20 autonomous republics, eight autonomous regions and ten national territories embracing their respective nationalities. Here are some details about the republics whose population includes Uighurs:

Kazakh SSR. Area 2,717,300 square kilometres (1,049,149 square miles). Population 14,500,000: Kazakhs, Russians, Ukrainians, Uzbeks, Byelorussians, Uighurs, Koreans, Dungans. Capital Alma Ata (population 871,000).

Uzbek SSR. Area 447,400 square kilometres (172,741 square miles). Population 14,500,000: Uzbeks, Russians, Tatars, Kazakhs, Tajiks, Karakal-

Khaliskhan Kadyrova, Honoured Artist of the Uzbek SSR, a soloist of the Uighur Theatre of Musical Comedy.

Uighur writer Khismet Abdullin, a member of the Union of Soviet Writers, chairman of the Council for Uighur Literature at the Union of Writers of Kazakhstan, was awarded the Badge of Honour on his fiftieth birthday in 1975.

paks, Uighurs, Koreans, Ukrainians. Capital Tashkent (population 1,689,000).

Kirghiz SSR. Area 198,500 square kilometres (76,640 square miles). Population approximately 3,500,000: Kirghiz, Russians, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Tatars, Uighurs, Kazakhs, Tajiks. Capital Frunze (population 511,000).

Turkmen SSR. Area 488,100 square kilometres (188,455 square miles). Population over 2,600,000: Turkmen, Russians, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Tatars, Uk-

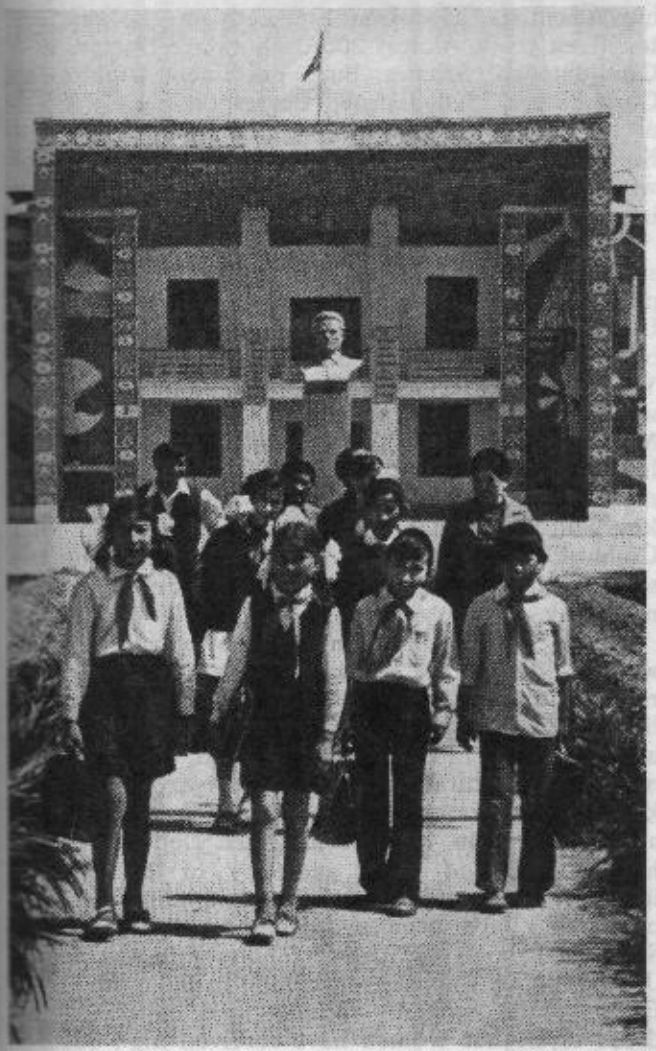
rainians, Uighurs, Armenians. Capital Ashkhabad (population 302,000).

Although Soviet Uighurs account for less than one hundredth per cent of the USSR's total population of 260 million they enjoy the same rights as representatives of larger national groups and play an active role in the country's political, cultural and economic life.

There are Uighurs among the Deputies to the highest bodies of state authority in union republics, their Supreme Soviets. Hundreds of Uighurs are Deputies to rural, district, city and regional Soviets (councils). Many hold executive posts in Communist Party, state and public organizations. There are administrative districts near Alma Ata in Kazakhstan where Uighurs form the bulk of the population. There the majority of executive posts are held by Uighurs.

One in three Uighurs is studying either at school or at a higher or secondary special educational establishment. There are no educational expenses in the USSR, since all tuition is free of charge. In keeping with a decision adopted in January 1978 on the basis of the USSR Constitution secondary school pupils will be provided with all textbooks free of charge. This naturally applies equally to the Uighurs. It should be noted that secondary education is compulsory in the USSR. Thousands of Uighurs are working as engineers, doctors, agronomists and teachers.

The Uighurs are making their contribution to the development of Soviet science. The number of Uig-



Palace of Culture in the village of Alta-ui, which in Uighur means "Six Houses". Once a small group of ramshackle houses, Alta-ui is now a large modern village in the Panfilov district of the Taldy-Kurghan region, Kazakhstan.

hur scientists has risen especially in the past ten to fifteen years. Almost 200 Uighurs are Doctors and Candidates of Science. Such prominent Uighurs as Gozhakhmed Sadvakasov, Corresponding Member of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences, and Murat Khamrayev, D. Sc. (philology), a Turcologist and winner of a USSR Komsomol prize, are well known in many countries.

Novels, stories, poems, textbooks for Uighur schools and books on social and political subjects are published in the Uighur language. Many books by Uighur authors are translated into other languages of the Soviet Union and into foreign languages. Widely known in the USSR are works by the Uighur writers, playwrights, composers and painters Umar Muhammadi, Turdy Khasan, Izim Iskanderov, Gulistan, USSR state prizewinner Kuddus Khodzhamyarov, Ziya Samedi, Hizmet Abdullin, Jamal Busakov and Ruzi Kadyri, to name but a few. Soviet Uighurs have their own professional theatre and ensembles and amateur activities have developed remarkably.

Before the establishment of Soviet rule Uighur women, like all the women of the Orient, had no rights and were doomed to lead a secluded way of life within their household. Today they are playing an active part in the country's social, political, economic and cultural life. Maryam Niyazova and Rakhilyam Seitova, two Uighur women members of a collective farm, have been elected Deputies to the highest body of state authority of Kazakhstan, its Supreme Soviet. For their outstanding achievements they have been awarded the title of Hero of Socialist Labour, the greatest honour in the Soviet Union. Uighur women are working in the most varied fields of the economy, science and culture. Hundreds of Uighur women have received high govern-

Dr. Sakhibjamal Karabayeva heads the central research laboratory of the State Medical Institute in Alma Ata.

ment awards. Sakhibjamal Karabayeva is the first Uighur woman to receive the degree of Doctor of Medicine. Soviet readers are well acquainted with the names of Uighur writer Patigul Sabitova and poetess Khanipa Salikhova. Rovshangul Ilakhunova, an actress at the Uighur Theatre in Alma Ata, is a People's Artist of the Kazakh SSR. The singers Khelicham Iliyeva, Maryam Semyatova, Mekhri Abdullayeva, Khaliskhan Kadyrova and Zinnat Akbarova and the ballet dancer Zainap Pastusheva have been awarded the titles of Honoured Artist of the Kazakh SSR and Honoured Artist of the Uzbek SSR.

The following true-life stories will give the reader a better idea of how my people live.